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CID Bio-Science ready to unveil American Legion remodel project

Open house is scheduled for Nov. 20

By Heather Acheson
Post-Record staff

After five months of construction work, the newly remodeled American Legion building in Camas will be unveiled to the public next week.

The building's new owner and occupant, CID Bio-Science, Inc., will host an open house Tuesday, Nov. 20, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

"We are excited to share our new space with the residents of Camas and Clark County who have expressed an interest in seeing the inside of the building," said Suzy Truitt, order administrator with CID Bio-Science.

Built approximately 80 years ago at 1554 N.E. Third Ave., the once weathered and dilapidated 11,000 square foot structure was purchased by CID in October 2011, and has since undergone a $1 million renovation.

B & G Builders, Inc., of Portland was the lead contractor on the project, and Portland-based ZGF Architects LLP designed the new headquarters and operations facility that "celebrates a Northwest style while incorporating CID Bio-Science Inc.'s business focus — high tech and botanical."

CID, led by President Leonard Felix, designs and manufactures portable instruments for agricultural and environmental research including laser leaf area meters, plant canopy imagers, digital soil profile and root monitors, hand-held photosynthesis systems and leaf spectrometers.

CID Bio-Science was founded 20 years ago, and Felix bought the business in 2007. It has been located at 4901 N.W. Camas Meadows Drive for 11 years. The company's 19 employees will occupy the new building on Dec. 3, and there are plans to grow the company within the new space in the years to come.

The renovation created 10,000 square feet of office and assembly space for the company, and 2,500 square feet of leasable space within the building. Felix said it was a major undertaking.

"The whole thing was a much bigger project than I had expected — everything from cost to labor to scale," he said. "I had never been involved in a project this big before."

"But it's everything that the architects and builders expected," Felix added. "There were no construction delays or problems.

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Heather Acheson/Post-Record

Crews work to finish up renovations on the American Legion Hall at 1554 N.E. Third Ave. On Tuesday, Nov. 20, its new occupants, CID Bio-Science, will welcome the public during an open house from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

CID Bio-Science hosts open house

Dawn Feldhaus/Post-Record

Area residents and officials were among the visitors during the CID Bio-Science open house. The Nov. 20 event included opportunities to meet CID President Leonard Felix (not pictured) and walk around the former American Legion building at 1554 N.E. Third Ave. The approximately 80-year old structure underwent a $1 million renovation. CID, a designer and manufacturer of portable instruments for agricultural and environmental research, had been located at 4901 N.W. Camas Meadows Drive for 11 years. The company is seeking additional tenants, to create an export development center. For more information, call 833-8835 or visit www.cid-inc.com.

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Everything went very smoothly."

The effort has been described as "an integration of old and new."

The exterior shell of the building has been maintained, original hardwood floor restored and brought back to its previous luster, and builders were able to reclaim all of the 1940s and 1950s lumber from a false ceiling and use it for the building's trim and for a divider wall.

"It's just beautiful," Felix said.

According to records kept by the American Legion Bennett-Barnett Post No. 27, construction of the original wood frame building started in 1924 after the property was purchased for $445 from Crown Willamette Paper Company by Post No. 27. It was designed by noted architect D.W. Hillborn.

Over the years, the facility has been used for social events such as weddings and receptions, community gatherings, and as a roller skating rink. It also housed a neon sign business and museum.

Earlier this month, the Clark County Historic Preservation Commission approved the building for listing on the Clark County Historic Register.

In addition to the tax breaks this offers the company, Felix said it is a step toward honoring the history of the structure. A way-side display recognizing the American Legion will soon be installed underneath the flagpole on the site.

"I think the building is well tied to the community," Felix said. "We are teaming up with the American Legion post to recognize the connection between the building and its history. The building will forever be referred to as the American Legion Hall."

Historical photos of American Legion Hall sought

In an effort to document the history of the American Legion Hall building, photographs of it and events that have been held inside it are being sought by CID Bio-Science.

"Despite all of the research that has been completed on the building, we have been unable to unearth any pictures of the original building and would love some for a historical piece we are putting together," said Suzy Truitt, the company's order administrator.

Anyone with access to photos of the building should contact Truitt at 833-8835.